

PIARC Winter Congress Presentation in Closing session January 31 2002  
By Kent Gustafson, English-speaking secretary of committee C17

Mr Chairman, Dear delegates

Before I give a short summary of the activities of this congress I would like to express my sincere thanks to some people who have contributed a lot to the overwhelming success of this event.

The organisers with Secretary General Mr Sakai who have all the time since the Luleå congress in 1998 planned it well and carried it out in a most professional way.

The chairman of the C17 committee, Mr. Tazaki, the assistant chairman Mr Ishimoto and the French speaking secretary Mr Giloppé. Mr Tazaki have led the work of the committee in a meritorious way and well assisted by Mr Ishimoto. Mr Ishimoto has also managed the work on the Ice and Snow Data Book and Mr Giloppeé has been working on the glossary of winter terms and put a valuable milestone in the exchange of information by sorting out the definitions and meaning of winter terms in many languages.

All members of the C17 Committee for their devoted work of planning and executing the technical program of this congress. The C17 committee has put together a very comprehensive technical program that has been wider and deeper than any winter congress before.

All authors who made proposals of abstracts and submitted full papers.

All others who have in one or another way made a contribution in the planning and execution of this event. I have in mind exhibitors, staff and service people and many others. And last but not least all of you, the participants.

This congress, the first one in this millennium and first time in Asia, has been an important event, which allowed experts from all over the world to come together in fruitful discussions and exchange of information in all different aspects of winter road maintenance and management. This has been a meeting place for all those who work with winter related topics, road administrators, contractors, suppliers, researchers, decision makers and other categories of winter people. During these days we have met and shared our results and experience between organisations, countries, continents but most important of all between people. We have realised the importance of technology transfer but also the significant share that the whole of the personnel plays which makes winter service on our roads. There is technology but also the human side of the approach.

The theme for this congress was "New challenges for Winter Road Service". The program and the congress as a whole have really lived up to this theme and expectations. Presentations and discussions have focused on the demands, requirements and challenges of the future. Challenges that are changing and different from what we have seen earlier.

There is a common trend in many countries today that the road administrators face a new role and the reasons for this are:

Less funding which means that efficiency, regarding policies, strategies and technology must be increased  
Procurement of maintenance and operation in open competition leading to increased use of the private sector

New technology (ITS, Internet, management systems) is available

Health related issues such as traffic safety and environment effects have come into focus

The single most voluminous topic was also this time the basic and traditional theme for winter maintenance people, Development of snow-removal and ice control technology. We have learned about all the different measures to keep our roads clear and safe in wintertime and we have also seen a wider aspect of snow and ice control technology.

The organisers have also been able to include related topics of great effect socially and economically for countries with severe winter climate. The scope of this congress has been much broader than ever before and included topics as Winter Road Policies and Strategies, Snow and Ice Management and its Costs, Winter Road Issues and Traffic Safety in Urban Areas, Environment and Energy, Telecommunications Technology.

To commemorate this, the first International Winter Road Congress of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the first winter congress ever arranged in Asia, the Japanese Organising Committee arranged a special session on the theme "Winter Road Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The session aimed at the exchange of opinions among participants from around the world toward the proper direction of road service in the new century. Main topics were among others Improvement of mobility and quality of life, Service level for road users, Traffic safety and risk control and Environment. Panel discussion by researchers and road administrators took place about the latest development in winter road service and solutions for present issues and prospects for the future.

The congress also included a special session on Sustainable Road Maintenance Organised by the PIARC Executive Committee. This event consisted of several technical presentations by invited speakers and a free discussion involving the general audience.

To summarise I would say that we have had a very comprehensive program of high quality during the past days and a full program that have most probably satisfied the participants.

Besides the technical sessions there has been a very impressive social program, exhibition, technical visits and tours. Participants to this congress have had a very tough task in the decision process how to optimise the time spent.

The Luleå congress in 1998 was at that time a success and it was expressed that it would be hard to challenge this result. However I would say that the Japanese organisers in all ways, both qualitatively and quantitatively, has done this and I would characterise the congress as the most successful winter congress ever. Let me give some figures to illustrate the quantitatively success.

This congress have had around 2100 participants compared to 950 in 1998. Participants came from 52 countries compared to 41 countries in Luleå.

Number of proposed papers this time were 216 and accepted for full paper submission and peer review 176. Final number of accepted papers were 124 for oral presentation and 45 for poster session. Compared to 58 oral and 45 poster presentations in Luleå. In Luleå we needed two parallel sessions to present the papers but this time we needed four parallel sessions. We can all note that this congress figure is above the numbers in the preceding congress.

Between the two congresses there is also a development in publication process, which has been reflected in the congress proceedings. At this conference we have followed the path introduced in the Kuala Lumpur World Congress and entered into the electronic publishing. To this congress we decided to publish the proceedings on CD-ROM and this very comprehensive disc contains all accepted papers. Besides this it includes a full-text search function, which enable you to easily find the paper you want or papers related to special key words. I am sure that you will have a good benefit of this disc long after the congress is closed.

Finally I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you that have supported the work of the C17 committee and to my work as secretary in the committee. I give my special thanks to all the members of the organising committee for their great support during the past four years.